

**ECOSYSTEM STATUS INDICATORS*****Habitat*****HAPC Biota – Gulf of Alaska**

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The biennial survey in the Gulf of Alaska does not sample any of the HAPC fauna well. The survey gear does not perform well in many of the areas where these organisms are prevalent and survey effort is quite limited in these areas as a result. Even in areas where these habitats are sampled, the gear used in the survey is ill-suited for efficient capture of these organisms. Variability is also an important issue as point estimates are often strongly influenced by a very small number of catches. Therefore, the survey results provide very limited information about abundance or abundance trends for these organisms. Perhaps the most notable aspect of the results is the general lack of detectable abundance trends due to the variability of the estimates (even ignoring the catchability issues mentioned above). A couple of general patterns are clearly discernible, however. Sponge (Porifera) abundance generally decreases from west to east across the GOA. Sea anemones (Actiniaria) also seem to be more abundant in the central and western GOA than in the eastern GOA (Figure 36).

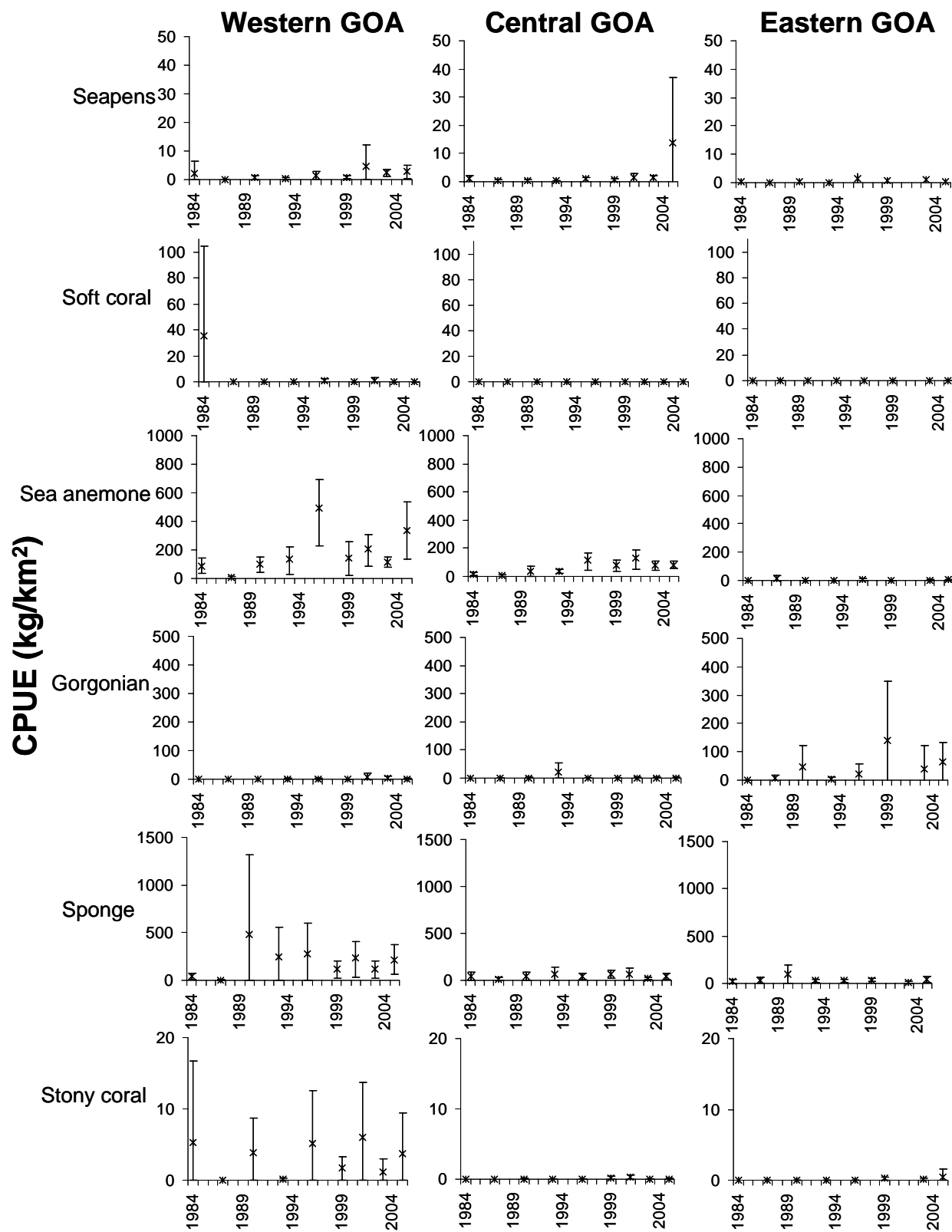


Figure 36. CPUE of HAPC organisms from the Gulf of Alaska biennial survey from 1984 through 2005. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.